

# MONTANA UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

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## Montana's Milestone: 10 Million Nonresident Visitors

Preliminary estimates recently released from ITRR show that Montana's non-resident visitation reached a major milestone—10 million visitors in 2005! Nonresident visitation in Montana increased 4 percent over 2004 which was the biggest year to year increase since 1998. Collectively, these non-resident visitors spent over \$1.9 billion in Montana, which contributed to over 29,000 jobs resulting in \$531 million in income.

The number of hotel/motel rooms sold increased 3 percent in 2005 over 2004 and airport deboardings increased 7 percent in 2005 with all eight airports reporting growth.

Earlier this year, Governor Schweitzer had given the mandate to the Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI) Directors to increase non-resident visitation within the next three years to 10 million visitors. "We are extremely pleased that Montana's tourism industry has hit the mark well ahead of the Governor's schedule," comments Montana Promotion Division Administrator Betsy Baumgart "and the industry appears well-positioned to continue to bring new dollars to Montana's economy."

## Promising Outlook for Niche International Travel

Following a successful World Travel Market (WTM) in 2004, the Rocky Mountain International (RMI) states of Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota and Idaho returned to WTM with high expectations. They were not disappointed. The traffic in the hall and specifically to the RMI booth exceeded last year. Most of the key tour operators and

many journalists who have product in the RMI region or have covered the RMI region were present. Two Montana suppliers—Big Mountain Resort and the Montana Tribal Tourism Alliance—also attended and added some well-received product diversity to the group. There were 96 leads generated, an increase of 15% over 2004. Leads from the show can be found on the intranet site at [travelmontana.mt.gov](http://travelmontana.mt.gov), under *Our Programs/Overseas Marketing*. The password to access the leads is *overseas*.

An examination of the leads shows an increased interest in the region from niche operators such as:

- Incentive and specialty travel (Blue Chip Events)
- Ski/Winter product (Ski Safari)
- Active holidays (Hooked on Cycling - Walking Holidays)
- Fishing (Fly 2 Fish - UK) and (Centro Sevilla Congressos - Spain)
- Camping and Native American product (Great Western Journeys - UK)
- And the long-standing ranch specialists (Ranch America, Ranch Rider, In the Saddle, etc.)

In addition to the tour operators, 28 journalists and/or publications had meetings as well. The RMI-UK office did a successful job of bringing people to the booth, pre-scheduling 26 appointments. Results of these meetings included itinerary planning for current and future fly-drives, future press fam trips for skiing and discussions of Roundups, Mega Fams and RMI's official receptive operators.

Montana contracts with RMI to coordinate their international tourism promotion activities along with the states of WY, SD and ID.

### National Trends in the UK Market

The UK remains third in U.S. visitation, behind only Mexico and Canada, with

4,302,000 visitors in 2004. A favorable exchange rate of 1.80 U.S. dollars for each British pound means that travel to anywhere in the U.S. is a bargain for Brits. According to Matt Bates, chairman of the UK Visit USA Association, "The USA market is growing strongly, and in so doing, retains its position both as the UK's favorite long haul holiday destination and (one of) the largest international origins to the USA." In terms of RMI's TRIP report numbers the UK office measured over 958,000 potential overnights, the highest ever in any market.

## Feature Presentations Set for 2006 Governor's Conference

Creating a competitive advantage, profitable response to trends and rules for tourism success are the focus of the feature presentations planned for the April 10-11, 2006, Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation in Great Falls. Two general session presentations open the conference Monday morning, April 10, and a third begins the Tuesday, April 11 agenda.

Here are the "headliners" for the general session presentations:

### Monday

- Ed Barlow, Creating the Future, Inc., will open the two-day conference with the presentation "Creating A Competitive Advantage For Tourism." Barlow, a futurist and strategic planning facilitator, has worked with a long list of tourism associations and businesses as well as other private and public sector entities.
- Dr. Emilyn Sheffield, California State University Department of Recreation Management, presents "National & Regional Travel & Demographic Trends: Implications for Montana." Dr. Sheffield will follow up her general session talk with

two afternoon work sessions focused on how to respond profitably to the trends she previously highlighted.

#### Tuesday

- Roger Brooks, Destination Development, Inc., shares his "Top Ten Immutable Rules for Tourism Success" in the morning opener. A popular tourism industry presenter, Brooks shares more rules for success in a late morning break-out session.

Twenty other break-out sessions and field trip offerings as well as social activities make up the conference's two-day agenda. Full details and registration information are available on the conference website: [travelmontana.mt.gov/conference](http://travelmontana.mt.gov/conference).

#### Great Falls Area Tours and Field Trips Offered to 2006 Governor's Conference Attendees

Governor's Conference attendees wanting to get to know the Great Falls area better will have some excellent opportunities just before and during the conference.

#### Sunday, April 9:

- Great Falls Historic Trolley is offering 3 fully narrated tours of Great Falls' major attractions, historical and recreation sites: 1:30-3:30 p.m., 4:00-6:00 p.m. and 6:30-8:15 p.m. \$5/person, limited seating, reservations requested, 406-771-1100, [www.GreatFallsHistoricTrolley.com](http://www.GreatFallsHistoricTrolley.com).

#### Tuesday, April 11:

- Five field trips are part of the conference agenda Tuesday afternoon, 1:30-5:00 p.m. If interested, conference attendees must choose a field trip option as part of their registration. Tour guides and transportation provided; limited seating, details on conference website: [travelmontana.mt.gov/conference/agenda.shtm](http://travelmontana.mt.gov/conference/agenda.shtm).

### Broadus VIC partners with community youth

A joining of the young and old(er) helped bolster a win-win partnership in Broadus. The Broadus High School's Business Professionals of America (BPA) organization needed to raise

some funds for their national trip to Orlando, Florida. The employees of the Broadus Visitor Information Center were in need of hands-on computer training. What resulted were computer tutorials given to the VIC staff from several BPA students. A total of 18 hours later, the Broadus VIC staff finds themselves more comfortable navigating the keys of a computer and the Broadus BPA organization has helped increase their fundraiser coffers. Nice work Broadus!



Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

### Calendar of Events

#### January

- 4 Absarokee CTAP
- 9 Cooke City CTAP
- 10 Butte CTAP
- 13 Tourism Advisory Council Orientation for new council members, Helena, MT
- 13 Special Event Grants application deadline
- 20-23 Sundance Film Festival, Park City, UT
- 23-24 NAJ Tour Operator Summit, Los Angeles, CA

#### February

- 1-4 Go West Summit, St. George, UT
- 3-8 American Bus Association Convention, Nashville, TN
- 6-8 Tourism Advisory Council Meeting-Fairmont Hot Springs, Anaconda, MT

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to: [travelmontana.mt.gov](http://travelmontana.mt.gov)

### Did You Know?

- In December, the historic mining town of Philipsburg was highlighted in a 4-minute segment on NBC's Today Show in a special report by Bob Dotson, NBC's national news correspondent, for his American Stories series.
- October's issue of *Money* magazine had a travel feature on Big Sky Resort and the surrounding area emphasizing the ability to get more value for your vacation dollar with fewer crowds.
- Ice boating on Canyon Ferry via a profile of Keith Kallio, Montana ice sports guru, was featured in the November issue of *Esquire* magazine.
- "Big Pancake Country"—*Gourmet* magazine's 'Roadfood Menu' column in the November issue takes a tour through Montana, sleuthing out the state's finest flapjacks in places like Stanford, Great Falls and Winnett.
- Montana's one-on-one photography trek in conjunction with *Popular Photography* Magazine garnered a \$3,050 bid on eBay. A portion of the proceeds will go to Global Giving Charity which assists with Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts.

#### Historical Society News:

- World famous composer and pianist Philip Aaberg from Chester and Montana Historical Society historian Ellen Baumlner have teamed up to produce an audiobook titled "Beyond Spirit Tailings: Montana's Mysteries, Ghosts, and Haunted Places."



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